

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND
DECISION RECORD

Shotgun Project Area
Road Closures and Road Improvement
Environmental Assessment No. OR090-00-09

Background

The McKenzie Resource Area completed an environmental assessment (EA) and preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for a proposal to close an estimated 9 miles of road and improve an estimated 2.3 miles of road in the Shotgun Project Area. The project will occur in the Shotgun Project area which is part of the Mohawk drainage. The actions would take place over 5 years starting in fiscal year 2000.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (OR090-00-09) and all other information available to me, it is my determination that implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the *Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (April 1994) and the *Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (June 1995). This EA is in conformance with the above-mentioned documents, and does not, in and of itself, constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

Consultation

Consultation with US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and US National Marine and Fisheries Service (NMFS) occurred through programmatic biological assessments.

Public Comments

A public notice advertising the availability of the EA and preliminary FONSI appeared in the Eugene Register-Guard on April 19, 2000. Additionally, the EA and preliminary FONSI were mailed to interested individuals and organizations (EA, p. 26). A 30-day public comment period closed on May 19, 2000. Two letters were received. Some of the public comments can be grouped into categories and are discussed below.

Similar & Connected Actions

Actions covered under this EA are not connected to actions covered under the Shotgun Trails EA. Closing and improving roads mentioned in the EA can occur without implementing the actions in the Shotgun Trail EA or needing those actions to occur to justify this proposal. The actions covered in the Shotgun Trail EA and this EA are similar actions. However, similar actions are not required to be in the

same EA. In the cumulative effects, both EAs discuss future trail work and road work. A complete picture of planned activities is displayed. Therefore, it is not necessary or required to have one EA for the Shotgun Trail EA action and the road closures and improvement actions.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The FONSI has been revised based on the comments received. Statements were removed that were unnecessary or confusing.

Transportation Plan

A transportation planning effort occurred in 1998 that assessed existing conditions and future needs of roads in the Shotgun Project Area. This information was used to help develop the proposed actions for this EA.

Scoping

Adequate scoping occurred for this project. The purpose of the Eugene District newsletter is to inform people about projects at various stages of the planning process and to give people an opportunity to indicate their interest in a particular project.

Clearly define prescription for each road

The decision is to close the roads or not. The EA described the three possible ways that roads would be closed. The specific method of closing a road will be selected during the project design.

In section 2.3 what is meant by resource problems

Resource problems are described in section 2.2 under the paragraph labeled "reduce the number of roads with road related resource problems."

Why weren't BLM roads 15-1-17.3, 15-1-21, 15-1-19.2 and 15-1-20.1 selected for trail conversion?

These roads were not considered for road to trail conversions for a variety of reasons such as the recreation use was considered low, they were not part of a major loop, or there were nearby trails that parallel the roads.

Scotch Broom

Scotch broom would probably spread into the road bed of the roads closed. The design feature was developed to keep the scotch broom from moving from one road location to another.

BLM does not need to do anything

Chapter 4 of the EA gives a description of the impacts of doing nothing. We need to do something in areas where the condition of the road is causing increased sedimentation to the streams.

Decision and Rationale

It is my decision to select Alternative 2 - Road Closures and Improvements. All of the design features described in the EA (pp. 8) will be implemented. Alternative 2 was selected because roads need to be closed to address resource problems as discussed in the EA and because funds for road maintenance are

decreasing. Roads need to be improved to address potential safety problems, sedimentation impacts to streams and fish passage concerns.

The Proposed Action is consistent with the standards and guidelines in the "Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl," April 1994. Based on the analysis discussed and presented in the EA, the Proposed Action is consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy and the objectives for the Riparian Reserves, and would not prevent or retard attainment of any of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives (EA, p. 4-5). The Proposed Action is consistent with the analysis and recommendations in the Mohawk/McGowan Watershed Analysis (1995).

The No Action Alternative was not selected because it would allow the sedimentation, impacts to stream bank integrity and fish passage concerns to continue. The No Action Alternative would also allow roads to degrade due to lack of maintenance.

Administrative Review Opportunities

The decision to implement this project may be appealed to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. If an appeal is taken, the notice of appeal must be filed in this office within thirty (30) days of the publication of the notice of this decision in the Eugene Register-Guard for transmittal to the Board. A copy of the notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs, must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 500 NE Multnomah Street, Suite 607, Portland, Oregon, 97323, within the same time frame. In taking an appeal, there must be strict compliance with the regulations. In accordance with 43 CFR 4.21, an appellant has the right to petition the Office of Hearing and Appeals to stay the implementation of the decision; however, an appellant must show standing and present reasons for requesting a stay of the decision. The petition for stay must be filed together with a timely notice of appeal (43 CFR 4.21(a)(2)).

Approved by: Emily Rice
Field Manager, McKenzie Resource Area

Date: June 22, 2000